

## Monday, November 29

*I confessed my sin to you; I did not cover my error. . . .  
And you pardoned the error of my sins.—Psalm 32:5.*

We show that we appreciate Jehovah’s forgiveness when we pray for it, accept discipline, and work hard to avoid repeating our mistakes. When we take these steps, we will regain our inner peace. How encouraging it is to know that “Jehovah is close to the brokenhearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit”! (Psalm 34:18) As these last days come to a close, the causes of anxiety are likely to increase. When you have anxious thoughts, do not delay in seeking Jehovah’s help. Study the Bible diligently. Learn from the examples set by Hannah, the apostle Paul, and King David. Ask your heavenly Father to help you identify the cause of your anxiety. (Psalm 139:23) Let him carry your burdens, especially those over which you have little or no control. If you do, you can be like the psalmist who sang to Jehovah: “When anxieties overwhelmed me, you comforted and soothed me.”—Psalm 94:19. *w20.02* 24 paragraph 17; 25 paragraphs 20-21

## Tuesday, November 30

*All Scripture is inspired of God.—2 Timothy 3:16.*

The Greek word translated “inspired of God” literally means “God-breathed.” God used his spirit to “breathe” his thoughts into the minds of Bible writers. When we read the Bible and meditate on what we read, God’s instructions enter our mind and heart. Those inspired thoughts move us to bring our life in line with God’s will. (Hebrews 4:12) But to benefit fully from holy spirit, we must set aside time to study the Bible regularly and to think deeply about what we read. Then God’s Word will influence all that we say and do. Also, we must worship God together. (Psalm 22:22) Jehovah’s spirit is present at meetings. (Revelation 2:29) When we meet for worship with fellow Christians, we pray for holy spirit, we sing Kingdom songs based on God’s Word, and we listen to Bible-based instruction presented by brothers who have been appointed by holy spirit. To benefit fully from holy spirit, however, we need to come prepared to participate in the meetings. w19.11 11 paragraphs 13-14

## **Wednesday, December 1**

*There is . . . a time to be silent.—Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7.*

If we fail to control our speech, it can cause a lot of damage. For example, if you meet someone who lives in a land where our work is banned, are you tempted to ask him to give details about how our work is carried out in that country? No doubt your motives are good. We love our brothers and are interested in what is happening to them. We also want to be specific when praying for them. However, this is a time when we should hold back from speaking. If we put pressure on someone who has confidential information, we show a lack of love—both to that person and to the brothers and sisters who are relying on him to keep quiet about their activity. Certainly, none of us would want to add to the difficulties of our brothers and sisters who live in countries where our work is under ban. Similarly, no brother or sister serving in such a land would want to reveal details about how Witnesses living there conduct their ministry or Christian activities. w20.03 21 paragraphs 11-12

## Thursday, December 2

*You certainly will not die.—Genesis 3:4.*

God did not intend for humans to die. But in order to live forever, Adam and Eve had to obey Jehovah, who gave them a simple command: “As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:16, 17) Then Satan came on the scene. Speaking through a serpent, he said the words of today’s text to Eve. Sadly, she believed the lie and ate the fruit. Later, her husband too ate the fruit. (Genesis 3:6) In this way, sin and death entered the human family. (Romans 5:12) Adam and Eve died, just as God had said they would. But Satan did not stop lying about death. At some point in time, he began to introduce other lies. One of those lies is the teaching that the physical body dies but that some part of the person lives on, perhaps in the spirit realm. Variations of that lie have deceived countless humans right down to our day.—1 Timothy 4:1. *w19.04* 14-15 paragraphs 3-4

## Friday, December 3

*When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, to think as a child, to reason as a child.—1 Corinthians 13:11.*

Children are not fully developed in their ability to think, to reason, or to recognize and avoid danger. So it is all too easy for devious abusers to deceive children. Abusers teach children dangerous lies, such as the idea that the child is to blame, that the abuse must be kept secret, that no one will listen or care if the child reports the abuse, or that sexual acts between an adult and a child are actually normal expressions of sincere love. Such lies can distort a child's thinking ability and perception of truth for many years. Such a child may grow up thinking of herself or himself as damaged, defiled, and unworthy of love or comfort. It is not surprising, then, that sexual abuse can cause lasting harm. We are living in the last days, a time when many have "no natural affection" and when "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse."—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13. w19.05 15 paragraphs 7-8

## **Saturday, December 4**

*In this way you will fulfill the law of the Christ.—Galatians 6:2.*

In what ways did Jesus teach? First, he taught people by what he said. His words had power because they conveyed the truth about God, taught the real meaning of life, and pointed to God's Kingdom as the remedy for all human suffering. (Luke 24:19) Jesus also taught by example. By how he lived, he showed his followers how they should live. (John 13:15) When did Jesus teach? He taught during his ministry on earth. (Matthew 4:23) He also taught his followers shortly after he was resurrected. For example, he appeared to a group of disciples—perhaps numbering over 500—and gave them the command to “make disciples.” (Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 15:6) As head of the congregation, Jesus continued to instruct his disciples after he returned to heaven. For instance, about 96 C.E., Christ directed the apostle John to give encouragement and counsel to anointed Christians.—Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:1. w19.05 3 paragraphs 4-5

## **Sunday, December 5**

*Make sure of the more important things.—Philippians 1:10.*

It takes a great deal of effort to earn a living these days. Many of our brothers work long hours just to provide the necessities of life for their families. Countless others spend several hours each workday traveling to and from their place of employment. Many support themselves by doing hard physical labor. By the end of the day, these hardworking brothers and sisters are exhausted! The last thing many are inclined to do is study. The fact is, though, that we must find time to study—really study—God’s Word and our Christian publications. Our relationship with Jehovah and our everlasting life depend on it! (1 Timothy 4:15) Some rise early every day and study when their home is quiet and their mind is fresh after a night’s rest. Others set aside a few tranquil minutes at the end of the day to take in spiritual food and meditate on it. w19.05 26 paragraphs 1-2

Song 137 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

**“Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People”:** (10 min.)

**Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)

Jg 5:20—How did the stars fight from the heavens in behalf of Barak? (w05 1/15 25 ¶15)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:** (4 min.) Jg 4:1-16 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

**Initial Call:** (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer *The Watchtower* No. 2 2021. (1)

**Return Visit:** (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure. (4)

**Talk:** (5 min.) w06 3/1 28-29—Theme: In What Way Should “Women Keep Silent in the Congregations”?—1Co 14:34. (14)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

**Song 84**

**“How Can Sisters Reach Out?”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “Women Who Are Working Hard in the Lord” (video category OUR ACTIVITIES).

**Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) rr chap. 16 ¶14-20, box 16B

 Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People

A fearsome enemy oppressed Israel (Jg 4:3; 5:6-8; w15 8/1 13 ¶1)

Jehovah raised up Deborah to help his people (Jg 4:4-7; 5:7; w15 8/1 13 ¶2; see cover picture)

Jehovah used Jael to execute Sisera (Jg 4:16, 17, 21; w15 8/1 15 ¶2)

What does this account indicate about Jehovah’s regard for women?





# ***137 Faithful Women, Christian Sisters***

(Romans 16:2)

1. Sarah and Esther, Mary, Ruth, and others—  
All these were capable women, loyal wives.  
Godly devotion was foremost in their lives.  
They were faithful women, ones we know by name.  
There were others favored by Jehovah;  
Nameless in the record, their faith was just the same.
2. Goodness and courage, loyal love and kindness—  
Lovable qualities in all humankind,  
Virtues these excellent women bring to mind.  
They were fine examples we appreciate.  
In the same way now our Christian sisters  
Show a faithful spirit we all can imitate.
3. Mothers and daughters, sisters, wives, and widows,  
Willingly laboring, glad to do your part.  
Modest your bearing, submissive is your heart,  
Having God's approval, may you never fear.  
Christian sisters, may Jehovah keep you  
Firm in your conviction, your prize is drawing near.

## JUDGES 4-5

**4** But after E'hud died, the Israelites again did what was bad in Jehovah's eyes. <sup>2</sup> So Jehovah sold them into the hand of Ja'bin the king of Ca'naan, who reigned in Ha'zor. The chief of his army was Sis'e-ra, who lived in Ha-ro'sheth of the nations. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites cried out to Jehovah, because Ja'bin had 900 war chariots with iron scythes, and he harshly oppressed the Israelites for 20 years.

<sup>4</sup> Now Deb'o-rah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'pi-doth, was judging Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup> She used to sit under Deb'o-rah's palm tree between Ra'mah and Beth'el in the mountainous region of E'phra-im; the Israelites would go up to her for judgment. <sup>6</sup> She sent for Ba'rak the son of A-bin'o-am out of Ke'desh-naph'ta-li and said to him: "Has not Jehovah the God of Israel given the command? 'Go and march to Mount Ta'bor, and take 10,000 men of Naph'ta-li and Zeb'u-lun with you. <sup>7</sup> I will bring to you Sis'e-ra, the chief of Ja'bin's army, along with his war chariots and his troops to the stream of Ki'shon, and I will give him into your hand.'"

<sup>8</sup> At this Ba'rak said to her: "If you go with me, I will go, but if you do not go with me, I will not go." <sup>9</sup> To this she said: "I will certainly go with you. However, the campaign you are going on will not bring you glory, for it will be into the hand of a woman that Jehovah will give Sis'e-ra." Then Deb'o-rah got up and went with Ba'rak to Ke'desh. <sup>10</sup> Ba'rak summoned Zeb'u-lun and Naph'ta-li to Ke'desh, and 10,000 men followed his steps. Deb'o-rah also went up with him.

<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, He'ber the Ken'ite had separated from the Ken'ites, the descendants of Ho'bab, Moses' father-in-law, and his tent was pitched near the big tree in Za·a·nan'nim, which is at Ke'desh.

<sup>12</sup> They reported to Sis'e·ra that Ba'rak the son of A·bin'o·am had gone up to Mount Ta'bor. <sup>13</sup> At once Sis'e·ra assembled all his war chariots—900 chariots with iron scythes—and all the troops that were with him from Ha·ro'sheth of the nations to go to the stream of Ki'shon.

<sup>14</sup> Deb'o·rah now said to Ba'rak: “Rise up, for this is the day that Jehovah will give Sis'e·ra into your hand. Is Jehovah not going out before you?” And Ba'rak descended from Mount Ta'bor with 10,000 men following him. <sup>15</sup> Then Jehovah threw Sis'e·ra and all his war chariots and all the army into confusion before the sword of Ba'rak. Finally Sis'e·ra got down from his chariot and fled on foot. <sup>16</sup> Ba'rak chased after the war chariots and the army as far as Ha·ro'sheth of the nations. So Sis'e·ra's whole army fell by the sword; not even one remained.

<sup>17</sup> But Sis'e·ra fled on foot to the tent of Ja'el the wife of He'ber the Ken'ite, for there was peace between Ja'bin the king of Ha'zor and the house of He'ber the Ken'ite. <sup>18</sup> Then Ja'el came out to meet Sis'e·ra and said to him: “Come in, my lord, come in here. Do not be afraid.” So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. <sup>19</sup> Then he said to her: “Give me, please, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin bottle of milk and gave him a drink, after which she again covered him. <sup>20</sup> He told her: “Stand at

the entrance of the tent, and if anybody comes and asks you, 'Is there a man here?' say, 'No!'"

<sup>21</sup> But Ja'el the wife of He'ber took a tent pin and a hammer in her hand. Then while he was fast asleep and exhausted, she stealthily approached him and drove the pin through his temples and beat it into the ground, and he died.

<sup>22</sup> Ba'rak went there in pursuit of Sis'e-ra, and Ja'el now came out to meet him and said: "Come and I will show you the man you are looking for." He went in with her and saw Sis'e-ra lying dead, with the tent pin through his temples.

<sup>23</sup> So on that day, God subdued Ja'bin the king of Ca'naan before the Israelites. <sup>24</sup> The hand of the Israelites came down harder and harder against Ja'bin the king of Ca'naan, until they destroyed Ja'bin the king of Ca'naan.

**5** On that day Deb'o-rah along with Ba'rak the son of A-bin'o-am sang this song:

<sup>2</sup> "Because of the unbound hair in Israel,  
Because of the people's volunteering,  
Praise Jehovah!

<sup>3</sup> Listen, you kings! Give ear, you rulers!  
To Jehovah I will sing.  
I will sing praises to Jehovah, Israel's God.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah, when you went out from Se'ir,  
When you marched out of the territory of E'dom,  
The earth shook, and the heavens poured,  
The clouds poured down water.

- <sup>5</sup> Mountains melted before the face of Jehovah,  
Even Si'nai before the face of Jehovah, Israel's God.
- <sup>6</sup> In the days of Sham'gar the son of A'nath,  
In the days of Ja'el, the roads were deserted;  
Travelers kept to the back roads.
- <sup>7</sup> The villagers in Israel were no more;  
They were no more until I, Deb'o-rah, rose up,  
Until I arose as a mother in Israel.
- <sup>8</sup> They chose new gods;  
Then there was war in the gates.  
A shield could not be seen, nor a lance,  
Among 40,000 in Israel.
- <sup>9</sup> My heart is with the commanders of Israel,  
Who went as volunteers with the people.  
Praise Jehovah!
- <sup>10</sup> You riders on tawny donkeys,  
You who sit on fine carpets,  
And you who walk on the road,  
Consider!
- <sup>11</sup> The voices of the water distributors were heard at the  
watering places;  
There they were recounting the righteous acts of  
Jehovah,  
The righteous acts of his villagers in Israel.  
Then Jehovah's people went down to the gates.
- <sup>12</sup> Awake, awake, O Deb'o-rah!  
Awake, awake, sing a song!

Rise up, Ba'rak! Lead your captives away, you son of  
A·bin'o·am!

<sup>13</sup> Then those who were left came down to the nobles;  
Jehovah's people came down to me against the  
mighty.

<sup>14</sup> Out of E'phra·im was their origin, those in the valley;  
They are following you, O Benjamin, among your  
peoples.

From Ma'chir the commanders went down,  
And from Zeb'u·lun those who bear the recruiter's  
staff.

<sup>15</sup> The princes in Is'sa·char were with Deb'o·rah,  
As was Is'sa·char, so was Ba'rak.  
Into the valley plain he was sent on foot.  
Among the divisions of Reu'ben there was intense  
heart-searching.

<sup>16</sup> Why did you sit down between the two saddlebags,  
Listening to them playing their pipes for the flocks?  
For the divisions of Reu'ben, there was intense heart-  
searching.

<sup>17</sup> Gil'e·ad remained beyond the Jordan;  
And Dan, why did he stay with the ships?  
Ash'er sat idle at the seashore,  
And by his harbors he remained.

<sup>18</sup> Zeb'u·lun was a people who risked their lives to the point  
of death;  
Naph'ta·li also, on the open heights.

- <sup>19</sup> Kings came, they fought;  
The kings of Ca'naan then fought  
In Ta'a-nach, by the waters of Me-gid'do.  
No spoil of silver did they take.
- <sup>20</sup> From heaven the stars fought;  
From their orbits they fought against Sis'e-ra.
- <sup>21</sup> The torrent of Ki'shon washed them away,  
The ancient torrent, the torrent of Ki'shon.  
You trampled down the powerful, O my soul.
- <sup>22</sup> Then the hooves of horses pounded  
As his stallions galloped furiously.
- <sup>23</sup> 'Curse Me'roz,' said the angel of Jehovah,  
'Yes, curse its inhabitants,  
For they did not come to the assistance of Jehovah,  
To the assistance of Jehovah with the mighty ones.'
- <sup>24</sup> Most blessed of women is Ja'el  
The wife of He'ber the Ken'ite;  
She is most blessed of women living in tents.
- <sup>25</sup> He asked for water; she gave him milk.  
In a majestic banquet bowl she offered curdled milk.
- <sup>26</sup> With her hand she reached for the tent pin,  
Her right hand for the workman's mallet.  
And she hammered Sis'e-ra, she crushed his head,  
And she smashed and pierced his temples.
- <sup>27</sup> Between her feet he collapsed; he fell and lay still;  
Between her feet he collapsed and fell;

Where he collapsed, there he fell defeated.

<sup>28</sup> From the window a woman looked out,  
Sis'e-ra's mother peered out from the lattice,  
'Why is his chariot delayed in coming?  
Why are the hoofbeats of his chariots so late?'

<sup>29</sup> The wisest of her noble ladies would answer her;  
Yes, she too would repeat to herself,

<sup>30</sup> 'They must be dividing the spoil they found,  
A girl, two girls, to every warrior,  
Spoil of dyed cloth for Sis'e-ra, spoil of dyed cloth,  
An embroidered garment, dyed cloth, two  
embroidered garments  
For the necks of the plunderers.'

<sup>31</sup> So let all your enemies perish, O Jehovah,  
But let those who love you be like the sun rising in its  
glory."

And the land had rest for 40 years.



Song 137 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

**“Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People”:** (10 min.)

**Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)

Jg 5:20—How did the stars fight from the heavens in behalf of Barak? (w05 1/15 25 ¶15)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:** (4 min.) Jg 4:1-16 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

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**Talk:** (5 min.) w06 3/1 28-29—Theme: In What Way Should “Women Keep Silent in the Congregations”?—1Co 14:34. (14)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

**Song 84**

**“How Can Sisters Reach Out?”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “Women Who Are Working Hard in the Lord” (video category OUR ACTIVITIES).

**Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) rr chap. 16 ¶14-20, box 16B

 Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People

A fearsome enemy oppressed Israel (Jg 4:3; 5:6-8; w15 8/1 13 ¶1)

Jehovah raised up Deborah to help his people (Jg 4:4-7; 5:7; w15 8/1 13 ¶2; see cover picture)

Jehovah used Jael to execute Sisera (Jg 4:16, 17, 21; w15 8/1 15 ¶2)

What does this account indicate about Jehovah’s regard for women?



**November 29–December 5 / Judges 4-5**

## **Song 137 and Prayer**

**Opening Comments** (1 minute)

### **Treasures From God's Word**

**"Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People":** (10 minutes)

#### **A fearsome enemy oppressed Israel**

**Judges 4:3:** The Israelites cried out to Jehovah, because Jabin had 900 war chariots with iron scythes, and he harshly oppressed the Israelites for 20 years.

**Judges 5:6-8:** In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, In the days of Jael, the roads were deserted; Travelers kept to the back roads. The villagers in Israel were no more; They were no more until I, Deborah, rose up, Until I arose as a mother in Israel. They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates. A shield could not be seen, nor a lance, Among 40,000 in Israel.

## **w15 8/1 13 paragraph 1**

Sisera! The very name caused terror and panic in Israel. The Canaanite religion and culture were brutal, featuring child sacrifice and temple prostitution. What was it like to have a Canaanite general and his army dominating the land?

Deborah's song reveals that travel was nearly impossible in the land and village life had all but ended. (Judges 5:6, 7) We may imagine people cowering in the woods and hills, afraid to farm or to live in unwalled villages and terrified to travel on the open roads lest they be attacked, their children taken, and their women raped.

## **Jehovah raised up Deborah to help his people**

**Judges 4:4-7:** Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the mountainous region of Ephraim; the Israelites would go up to her for judgment. She sent for Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali and said to him: "Has not Jehovah the God of Israel given the command? 'Go and march to

Mount Tabor, and take 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun with you. I will bring to you Sisera, the chief of Jabin's army, along with his war chariots and his troops to the stream of Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.'"

**Judges 5:7:** The villagers in Israel were no more; They were no more until I, Deborah, rose up, Until I arose as a mother in Israel.

**Cover** [Image:] The prophetess Deborah sitting under a palm tree, encouraging Barak to help God's people.

Caption: Deborah encourages Barak to help God's people

### **w15 8/1 13 paragraph 2**

Terror reigned for 20 years, until Jehovah saw evidence that his stubborn people were ready to change or, as the inspired record of the song of Deborah and Barak says, "Until I, Deborah, rose up, until I arose as a mother in Israel." We do not know if Deborah, the wife of a man named Lappidoth, was a mother in a literal sense, but this expression was intended figuratively. In effect, Jehovah assigned Deborah to provide the nation with motherly protection. He

commissioned her to summon a strong man of faith, Judge Barak, and direct him to rise up against Sisera.—Judges 4:3, 6, 7; 5:7.

## **Jehovah used Jael to execute Sisera**

**Judges 4:16, 17:** Barak chased after the war chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the nations. So Sisera's whole army fell by the sword; not even one remained. But Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

**Judges 4:21:** But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent pin and a hammer in her hand. Then while he was fast asleep and exhausted, she stealthily approached him and drove the pin through his temples and beat it into the ground, and he died.

## **w15 8/1 15 paragraph 2**

Jael had to think fast. She offered Sisera a place to rest. He ordered her to conceal his presence from any man who

might come looking for him. She covered him when he lay down, and when he asked her for water, she gave him creamy milk. Soon Sisera sank into a deep sleep. Jael then took a pair of household implements that tent-dwelling women used often and skillfully—a tent pin and a mallet. Crouching near Sisera's head, she now faced the terrifying task of acting as an executioner for Jehovah. Even an instant of uncertainty or hesitation could have meant disaster. Did she think of God's people and of how this man had brutalized them for decades? Or did she think of the privilege of taking her stand for Jehovah? The record does not say. We know only that the deed was soon done. Sisera was dead!—Judges 4:18-21; 5:24-27.

What does this account indicate about Jehovah's regard for women?

[Image:] Collage: 1. Deborah sits under a palm tree and encourages Barak to help God's people. 2. Jael holds a tent pin and a hammer near Sisera, who is fast asleep.

## Spiritual Gems

**Judges 5:20—How did the stars fight from the heavens in behalf of Barak?**

**Judges 5:20:** From heaven the stars fought; From their orbits they fought against Sisera.

**w05 1/15 25 paragraph 5**

The Bible does not say whether this involved angelic assistance, meteorite showers that were interpreted ominously by Sisera's wise men, or perhaps astrological predictions for Sisera that proved false. Undoubtedly, however, there was some type of divine intervention.

What spiritual gems from this week's Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:** (4 minutes) Judges 4:1-16 (*th* study 10)

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

# Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK





Song 137 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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A fearsome enemy oppressed Israel (Jg 4:3; 5:6-8; w15 8/1 13 ¶1)

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What does this account indicate about Jehovah’s regard for women?





## INCREASE YOUR JOY IN THE MINISTRY

### Accept Jehovah's Help Through Prayer

It is Jehovah who makes the seed of truth take root and grow in someone's heart. (1Co 3:6-9) Therefore, in order to succeed in the ministry, we must rely on Jehovah to help us and our Bible students.

Ask Jehovah to help your students to endure pressures and to overcome obstacles. (Php 1:9, 10) Be specific. Pray for holy spirit to guide your thoughts and actions. (Lu 11:13) Teach your Bible students how to pray, and urge them to do so. Pray with and for your Bible students, using their name.

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION *EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF DISCIPLE-MAKING—ACCEPT JEHOVAH'S HELP—PRAYER, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:*

- What challenge did Neeta encounter in her study with Jade?

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- How did 1 Corinthians 3:6 help Neeta?

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- How was Neeta's challenge resolved?

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## SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

### Initial Call November (Special Campaign)

**Question:** Is an end to violence and war realistic?

**Scripture:** Ps 37:10, 11

**Link:** What Bible promise gives us hope?

- ▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:
  - wp21.2 5

### Initial Call December\*

**Question:** How do you view the Bible?

**Scripture:** Ro 15:4

**Link:** What Bible promise gives us hope?

- ▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:
  - Iffi 5

### Return Visit\*

**Question:** What Bible promise gives us hope?

**Scripture:** Re 21:3, 4

**Link:** How can we understand the Bible?

- ▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:
  - Iffi 7; wp21.2 14

\* You may adjust the question and link according to local circumstances.



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## Questions From Readers

### **What did the apostle Paul mean when he stated that women should “keep silent in the congregations”?**

Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in Corinth: “As in all the congregations of the holy ones, let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak.” (1 Corinthians 14:33, 34) In order for us to understand this correctly, it is helpful to consider the context of Paul’s counsel.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, Paul discussed matters relating to meetings of the Christian congregation. He described what should be discussed at such meetings and recommended how they should be conducted. (1 Corinthians 14:1-6, 26-34) Further, he stressed the objective of Christian meetings—“that the congregation may receive upbuilding.”—1 Corinthians 14:4, 5, 12, 26.

Paul’s instruction to “keep silent” appears three times in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Each time, it is addressed to a different group in the congregation, but in all instances, it is given for the same reason—that “all things take place decently and by arrangement.”—1 Corinthians 14:40.

First, Paul said: “If someone speaks in a tongue, let it be limited to two or three at the most, and in turns; and let someone translate. But if there be no translator, let him *keep silent* in the congregation and speak to himself and to God.” (1 Corinthians 14:27, 28) That did not mean that such a person was never to speak at meetings but that there were times when he should be silent. After all, the objective of the

meetings—to upbuild one another—would not be attained if he spoke in a language no one understood.

Second, Paul stated: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern the meaning. But if there is a revelation to another one while sitting there, let the first one *keep silent*.” This meant, not that the first prophet was to refrain from speaking at meetings, but that he had to be silent at times. Then the one having the miraculous revelation could address the congregation, and the objective of the meeting—that “all be encouraged”—would be achieved.—1 Corinthians 14:26, 29-31.

Third, Paul addressed Christian women only, stating: “Let the women *keep silent* in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak, but let them be in subjection.” (1 Corinthians 14:34) Why did Paul give this command to sisters? To preserve order in the congregation. He says: “If, then, they want to learn something, let them question their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in a congregation.”—1 Corinthians 14:35.

Perhaps some sisters were challenging what was said in the congregation. Paul’s counsel helped sisters to shun such a disorderly spirit and humbly accept their position within Jehovah’s headship arrangement, particularly with regard to their husbands. (1 Corinthians 11:3) In addition, by keeping silent, sisters would show that they did not aspire to be teachers in the congregation. When he wrote to Timothy, Paul showed that it would be improper for a woman to assume the role of teacher: “I do not permit a woman to teach, or to

exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence.”—  
1 Timothy 2:12.

Does that mean that a Christian woman must never speak during a congregation meeting? No. In Paul’s day, there were occasions when Christian women, perhaps impelled by holy spirit, prayed or prophesied in the congregation. On such occasions, they acknowledged their position by wearing a head covering. (1 Corinthians 11:5) Further, in Paul’s day and today, sisters along with brothers are urged to make a public declaration of their hope. (Hebrews 10:23-25) Besides doing this in the field ministry, sisters declare their hope and encourage others during congregation meetings by giving well-thought-out comments when invited to do so and by accepting assignments to share in demonstrations or student talks.

Hence, Christian women “keep silent” by refraining from trying to assume the role of a male and instruct the congregation. They do not raise argumentative questions that could challenge the authority of those who teach. By fulfilling their proper role in the congregation, Christian sisters greatly contribute toward an atmosphere of peace in which “all things [at congregation meetings] take place for upbuilding.”—  
1 Corinthians 14:26, 33.

### **[Footnote]**

In modern times, mature sisters follow that example when, because of circumstances, they have to substitute for a baptized man in a congregation setting.—See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2002, page 26.

## *Reaching Out*

(Matthew 9:37, 38)

1. Jehovah knows just what we need  
To bring us joy and to succeed.  
So he provides so many ways  
In which to serve and spend our days.

*(CHORUS)*

*Reaching out, giving all,  
for our God above.*

*And where the need is great, there we'll be,  
reaching out in love.*

2. There's work to do in ev'ry land.  
Where there's a need, we lend a hand.  
By reaching out, we show we care.  
We want to help and want to share.

*(Chorus)*

3. And here at home, in towns nearby,  
We plan, we build, new skills we try.  
We learn to speak a foreign tongue  
And bring good news to ev'ryone.

*(Chorus)*

Song 137 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

**“Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People”:** (10 min.)

**Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)

Jg 5:20—How did the stars fight from the heavens in behalf of Barak? (w05 1/15 25 ¶15)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:** (4 min.) Jg 4:1-16 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

**Initial Call:** (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer *The Watchtower* No. 2 2021. (1)

**Return Visit:** (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure. (4)

**Talk:** (5 min.) w06 3/1 28-29—Theme: In What Way Should “Women Keep Silent in the Congregations”?—1Co 14:34. (14)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

**Song 84**

**“How Can Sisters Reach Out?”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “Women Who Are Working Hard in the Lord” (video category OUR ACTIVITIES).

**Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) rr chap. 16 ¶14-20, box 16B

 Jehovah Uses Two Women to Deliver His People

A fearsome enemy oppressed Israel (Jg 4:3; 5:6-8; w15 8/1 13 ¶1)

Jehovah raised up Deborah to help his people (Jg 4:4-7; 5:7; w15 8/1 13 ¶2; see cover picture)

Jehovah used Jael to execute Sisera (Jg 4:16, 17, 21; w15 8/1 15 ¶2)

What does this account indicate about Jehovah’s regard for women?





## How Can Sisters Reach Out?



Sisters make valuable contributions to the Kingdom work. (Ps 68:11) They conduct many of the home Bible studies and make up a large percentage of the regular pioneers. Thousands of hardworking sisters serve as Bethelites, missionaries, construction volunteers or servants, and translators. Mature sisters build up their families and congregations. (Pr 14:1) Although sisters cannot serve as elders or ministerial servants, they can still set goals in the congregation. If you are a sister, what are some ways that you can reach out?

- Cultivate spiritual qualities. —1Ti 3:11; 1Pe 3:3-6
- Help sisters in the congregation who have less experience.—Tit 2:3-5
- Improve the quality and quantity of your ministry
- Learn another language
- Move where the need is greater
- Apply to work at Bethel or to assist with the construction of theocratic facilities
- Apply for the School for Kingdom Evangelizers

**WATCH THE VIDEO “WOMEN WHO ARE WORKING HARD IN THE LORD,” AND THEN ANSWER THIS QUESTION:**

- How did the comments of each sister encourage you?

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## "Women Who Are Working Hard in the Lord"

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**Sister 1:** I work as a legal secretary. I was quite happy with the work I was doing, but I was just coasting along, and I didn't really have that burning desire, at the time, to pioneer. I specifically remember a talk about young ones—what they were doing with their lives—and it really did make me think.

**Sister 2:** I work three days a week as a nanny. It's a good job for me. It helps me to do something that I love but also have the freedom to do things for Jehovah. I really love construction and particularly wanted to get involved with the project going on at Chelmsford. But at the time, I lived in the northeast of England, which would have been way too far to commute.

**Sister 3:** My work consists of supporting people in the community with mental health issues. My husband was involved in construction—that was his work—but also, he made himself available to be involved in any Kingdom Hall build, any construction. So in the beginning I thought: 'Yeah, that's his thing, not my thing. 'I'll stay home and pioneer. My construction skill is nonexistent.'

**Sister 1:** The talk just helped me to see that if I didn't have a desire to pioneer, then I should pray. I really felt motivated to want to change my life, so I started regular pioneering. Seeing young sisters and brothers, as well, that

were getting involved with doing different aspects of worship and seeing their joy in what they were doing construction wise really spurred me on to want to apply as well.

**Sister 2:** I prayed to Jehovah that I really wanted to be involved somehow in the project and that he would work things out. I started looking for accommodations and started looking for work. And within days, I had a job and somewhere to live; and two weeks later, I moved to London.

**Sister 3:** I knew my husband loved it so much, so I thought, 'I'll come with him.' Losing my husband in death is just something that happened very suddenly and very quickly. Initially, I had to go back home, but the avenue was opened for me to come back again if I wished to. After a period of time, I decided I would come back. The brothers were very conscious of my circumstance. This is my family. This is Jehovah's organization without a doubt. The brothers have given me all the support I need. It's always best to be busy in Jehovah's work; that's part of healing. When I came on-site and the brothers said, "We'd like you to drive one of our machines," I'd never driven construction machinery before. But I was able to be trained and felt confident after that.

**Sister 1:** I was invited to work on the Home Cleaning Team. It was not what I thought I would be doing in construction, but it's fun, and I really love knowing that Jehovah is happy with the work we do.

**Sister 2:** Very quickly after I moved, I was invited to commute to the branch relocation project. The first half of my week is working with children and playing with toy trucks, and then the second half of my week, I am driving this huge machine on a building site. There's really good emphasis on training, so you never feel completely out of your depth.

**Brother 1:** I really enjoy training; it's a very rewarding assignment. Sisters pay attention to detail; they don't get overconfident because they have a healthy respect for the machines that they're driving.

**Brother 2:** We have many positive comments from contractors and various authorities about the proactive training and use of women on our construction site. They're amazed at what they see because it's not normal in the industry. It reminds me of what it says in Romans chapter 16, where the apostle Paul mentions women by name "working hard in the Lord," and here on this site, we have lots of women doing just that.

**Sister 1:** Having no construction skills hasn't stopped me from being used at all. You're seeing sisters being used for things that they would never have pictured themselves doing, but they're doing it, and it's because they've been trained, and it's because Jehovah is behind it.

**Sister 3:** Being here has drawn me closer to Jehovah in a sense that you rely on him, that I rely on him daily.

**Sister 2:** If you had told me three years ago that I'd be commuting to the project every week and driving a massive truck around on-site, I probably wouldn't have believed you. I absolutely love coming here; it's like a dream come true. I just don't want it to end.

**Sister 1:** Looking back to when I first heard that talk at the convention, I'm really pleased that I used my time in these last days to serve Jehovah. I would encourage anybody to be in full-time service because it's such a joyful way of life.

(Jas. 1:17; Mal. 3:6) We should expect, then, that the six men with the smashing weapons and the man with the inkhorn will have a modern-day work to do!

<sup>14</sup> How, though, is Ezekiel’s prophetic vision fulfilled in our day? If we look back at how the vision was fulfilled in the past, we can learn what to expect now and in the future. Consider some of the developments we have seen or will see in fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

<sup>15</sup> *Jehovah warns people before a time of destruction.* As we saw in Chapter 11 of this publication, Jehovah commissioned Ezekiel “as a watchman to the house of Israel.” (Ezek. 3:17-19) Starting in 613 B.C.E., Ezekiel clearly warned Israel of the destruction that was approaching. Other prophets, including Isaiah and Jeremiah, also sounded a warning about the calamity that would befall Jerusalem. (Isa. 39:6, 7; Jer. 25:8, 9, 11) In our day, Jehovah, through Christ, has used a small group of anointed servants not only to feed pure worshippers, the domestics, but also to warn others about the fast-approaching great tribulation.—Matt. 24:45.

**14, 15. What examples show that Jehovah warns people before a time of destruction?**

<sup>16</sup> *Jehovah's people do not mark those who will survive.* Recall that Ezekiel was *not* told to go through Jerusalem himself and mark others for survival. Similarly, Jehovah's people today are *not* commissioned to mark worthy ones for survival. Rather, as domestics in Christ's spiritual household, we are commissioned to preach. We show that we take this commission seriously by zealously sharing the good news of God's Kingdom and by eagerly sounding the warning that this wicked world is rapidly nearing its end. (Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20) We thus have a share in helping honest-hearted ones to embrace pure worship.—1 Tim. 4:16.

<sup>17</sup> *To survive the coming destruction, individuals need to prove their faith now.* As we saw earlier, those who survived Jerusalem's destruction in 607 B.C.E. demonstrated *beforehand* their heartfelt rejection of wickedness and their devotion to pure worship. It is similar today. *Before the destruction comes*, individuals need to be “sighing and groaning”—deeply grieved at heart—over the wickedness of this world. And rather

**16. Do we as Jehovah's people mark those who will survive? Explain.**

**17. What do individuals need to do now in order to put themselves in line to be marked in the future?**

than hide their feelings, they must demonstrate by words and actions their devotion to pure worship. How can they do so? They need to react favorably to the preaching work that is being done today, to continue putting on a Christlike personality, to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah, and to support Christ's brothers loyally. (Ezek. 9:4; Matt. 25:34-40; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:21) Only those who pursue such a course now—and who enter the great tribulation as pure worshippers—will be in a position to be marked for survival.

<sup>18</sup> *The marking of deserving ones will take place in the heavenly realm.* In Ezekiel's day, angels had a role in marking faithful ones for survival. In the modern-day fulfillment, the man with the secretary's inkhorn represents Jesus Christ when he "comes in his glory" as Judge of all the nations. (Matt. 25:31-33) That coming of Jesus will take place during the great tribulation, after the destruction of false religion.\*<sup>[3]</sup> At that

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\*<sup>[3]</sup> Apparently, the destruction of Babylon the Great will not mean the death of all members of false religion. At that time, even some clergymen may abandon false religion and claim that they were never a part of it.—Zech. 13:3-6.

**18. (a) How and when will Jesus Christ mark deserving ones? (b) Do faithful anointed ones need to be marked? Explain.**

## SIGHING AND GROANING, MARKING, SMASHING WHEN AND HOW?

SEE PARAGRAPHS 17-19

The vision recorded in Ezekiel chapter 9 has a modern-day fulfillment. Our understanding of how events will unfold can help us to face the end of this system of things with confidence

### “Sighing and groaning”

**WHEN:** During the last days, *before* the great tribulation

**HOW:** Righthearted individuals show by their words and actions that they detest the wickedness of this world. Such ones respond favorably to the preaching work, continue putting on a Christlike personality, get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah, and loyally support Christ’s brothers

### “Marking”

**WHEN:** During the great tribulation

**HOW:** The man with the secretary’s inkhorn represents Jesus Christ when he comes as Judge of all the nations. Those of the great crowd will be favorably judged, or marked, as sheep, thus indicating that they will survive Armageddon

### “Smashing”

**WHEN:** At Armageddon

**HOW:** Jesus Christ and his heavenly armies, which will include the angels and his 144,000 corulers, will utterly destroy this wicked world and deliver pure worshippers into a righteous new world



crucial time, just before Armageddon begins, Jesus will judge people as sheep or goats. Those of the “great crowd” will be judged, or marked, as sheep, which thus indicates that they will “depart . . . into everlasting life.” (Rev. 7:9-14; Matt. 25:34-40, 46) What about faithful anointed ones? They do not need to be marked for survival through Armageddon. Rather, they will receive their final sealing either before they die or before the outbreak of the great tribulation. Then, at some point before Armageddon begins, they will be raised to heaven.—Rev. 7:1-3.

<sup>19</sup> *The heavenly King, Jesus Christ, and his heavenly armies will execute judgment on this system of things.* In Ezekiel’s vision, the six men with weapons for smashing did not begin the destruction until after the man in linen completed his marking work. (Ezek. 9:4-7) Likewise, the coming destruction will begin after Jesus judges people of all the nations and marks the sheep for survival. Then, during the war of Armageddon, Jesus will lead the heavenly executional forces, which will include the holy angels and all his 144,000

**19. Who will accompany Jesus in executing judgment on this system of things? (See the box “Sighing and Groaning, Marking, Smashing—When and How?”)**

corulers, against this wicked world, destroying it utterly and delivering pure worshippers into a righteous new world.—Rev. 16:14-16; 19:11-21.

<sup>20</sup> How thankful we are for the reassuring lessons we learn from Ezekiel’s vision of the man with the secretary’s inkhorn! We can have complete confidence that Jehovah will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. (Ps. 97:10) We know what we need to do now in order to be marked in the future for survival. As worshippers of Jehovah, we are determined to have the fullest possible share in declaring the good news and in sounding the warning to those who are sighing and groaning over the wickedness in Satan’s world. We thus may have the privilege of helping those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life” to join us in pure worship and thereby put themselves in line to be marked for survival into God’s righteous new world.—Acts 13:48.

**20. What reassuring lessons have we learned from Ezekiel’s vision of the man with the secretary’s inkhorn?**

## **YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP**

- 1** How does Ezekiel's vision of the man with the secretary's inkhorn highlight Jehovah's mercy?
- 2** What do you need to do now in order to be marked in the future for survival?
- 3** After considering Ezekiel's vision of the man with the inkhorn, what are you determined to do?

# 27      *The Revealing of God's Sons* (Romans 8:19)

1. The time is near when God reveals  
    His faithful chosen ones.  
    In heaven they will rule with Christ  
    As mighty spirit sons.

*(CHORUS)*

*The sons of God will be revealed  
    Along with Christ, their Lord.  
They'll join him in his victory  
    And share in his reward.*

2. And soon the last remaining ones  
    Will hear his final call.  
    The King of kings and Lord of lords  
    Will then collect them all.

*(Chorus)*

*(BRIDGE)*

And then with Christ, these sons of God  
    Will wage the final war.  
The joyous marriage to the Lamb  
    Will last forevermore.

*(Chorus)*

SEPTEMBER 2021

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
NOVEMBER 1–DECEMBER 5, 2021

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Study Article 35: November 1-7 Treasure Our Faithful Older Ones	2
Study Article 36: November 8-14 Value the Strength of Youth	13
Study Article 37: November 15-21 “I Will Shake All the Nations”	25
Study Article 38: November 22-28 Draw Close to Your Spiritual Family	38
Study Article 39: November 29–December 5 When a Loved One Leaves Jehovah	50

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### COVER PICTURE:

God's people around the globe have happily shared in witnessing to others about God's Kingdom (See study article 37, paragraph 13)

Credit: Globe based on NASA/Visible Earth imagery

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# 102      *“Assist Those Who Are Weak”*

(Acts 20:35)

1. Many are the weaknesses  
    That we all possess.  
    Still Jehovah cares for us,  
    Loves us nonetheless.  
He is so merciful;  
    His love, so powerful.  
    May we show this kind of love,  
    Help those in distress.
2. Some at times are weak in faith,  
    Strong though they appear.  
    By our reassuring words,  
    We can calm their fears.  
Weak ones to God belong;  
    His spirit makes them strong.  
    May we feel their pain and cares,  
    Help them dry their tears.
3. Rather than condemn the weak,  
    We should bear in mind  
    How much we can strengthen them  
    By our being kind.  
May we be diligent,  
    Give them encouragement.  
    As we lend our kind support,  
    Comfort they will find.

# When a Loved One Leaves Jehovah

*“How often they . . . made him feel hurt.”—PS. 78:40.*

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## SONG 102

*“Assist Those Who Are Weak”*

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## PREVIEW

How distressing it is when a loved one leaves Jehovah! This article considers how our God feels when this happens. It discusses practical things faithful family members can do to cope with the pain and to remain spiritually strong. This article will also discuss how all in the congregation can offer comfort and support to the family.



**HAS one of your loved ones been disfellowshipped from the congregation? That can be heartbreaking! “When my faithful spouse died after 41 years of marriage,” says a sister named Hilda, “I thought it was the worst thing I could ever experience.\* But when my son left the congregation, his wife, and his children, it was far, far worse for me.”**

**2 Think how heartbroken Jehovah must have been when members of his own angelic family turned their back on him! (Jude 6) And imagine how hurt he was at seeing his beloved people, the Israelites, rebel against him time and again. (Read Psalm 78: 40, 41.) Be assured that our loving heavenly Father is also hurt when someone you love leaves him. He understands the grief you are experiencing. He will compassionately provide you with the encouragement and the support you need.**

**3 In this article, we will discuss what we can do to receive Jehovah’s help when we are coping with such a loss. We will also examine how we can help others in the congregation who are facing this challenge.**

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**\* Some names in this article have been changed.**

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- 1. How might the disfellowshipping of a loved one affect some?**
- 2-3. According to Psalm 78:40, 41, how does Jehovah feel when his servants leave him?**



Jehovah understands how devastating the spiritual loss of a loved one can be

(See paragraphs 2-3)

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But first, let us consider a negative pattern of thinking that we must avoid.

## **AVOID BLAMING YOURSELF**

<sup>4</sup> When a precious son or daughter leaves Jehovah, it is common for the parents to wonder what more they could have done to help their young one stay in the truth. After his son was disfellowshipped, a brother named Luke admitted: “I blamed myself. I had nightmares about it. Sometimes I would cry and my heart ached.” Elizabeth, a sister who faced a similar situation, agonized: “What did I do wrong as a mother? I felt that I must have failed to inculcate the truth in my son.”

<sup>5</sup> We need to remember that Jehovah has given

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4. How do many parents feel when a son or a daughter leaves Jehovah?

5. Who is responsible when a person leaves Jehovah?

each of us the gift of free will. This means that we can choose whether we will obey him or not. Some young ones whose upbringing was far from ideal choose to serve Jehovah, and they make a success of their service. Others whose parents did their very best to bring them up in harmony with Scriptural principles turn their back on the truth once they get older. In the final analysis, we must personally decide whether we will serve Jehovah. (Josh. 24:15) So, grieving parents, fight the tendency to think that this tragedy must be your fault!

<sup>6</sup> At times, a parent abandons the truth and even the family. (Ps. 27:10) This can be devastating for children who had looked up to the parent as a role model. Esther, whose father was disfellowshipped, says: “I cried often because I realized that he was not just drifting away from the truth. He was making a deliberate choice to leave Jehovah altogether. I love my father, so when he was disfellowshipped, I constantly worried about his well-being. I even had panic attacks.”

<sup>7</sup> Young ones, if one of your parents has been disfellowshipped, our heart aches for you! Please be

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6. How might a young person be affected when a parent leaves God?

7. What are Jehovah’s feelings toward a young person whose parent is disfellowshipped?

assured that Jehovah is also keenly aware of your pain. He loves you and appreciates your loyalty, and so do we—your brothers and sisters. Remember, too, that you are *not* responsible for your parent’s decisions. As mentioned earlier, Jehovah has put a choice before every human. And each dedicated and baptized individual must “carry his own load of responsibility.”—Gal. 6:5, ftn.

<sup>8</sup> When someone you love leaves Jehovah, you understandably hold on to the hope that one day he will return to Him. What can you do in the meantime? You can look after your own spiritual health. By doing so, you will set a good example for other family members and perhaps even for the disfellowshipped one. You will also gain the needed strength to cope with your painful emotions. Let us discuss some practical steps you can take.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY SPIRITUALLY STRONG**

<sup>9</sup> Stick to a good spiritual routine. It is vital that you continue strengthening yourself and other family

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8. What can faithful family members do while waiting for their loved one to return to Jehovah? (See also the box “Return to Jehovah.”)

9. In what ways can you draw strength from Jehovah? (See also the box “Comforting Scriptures if Your Loved One Has Left Jehovah.”)



## Return to Jehovah

One mother says: “My hope for my disfellowshipped son is summed up in the words of Isaiah 55:7: ‘Let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy on him, to our God, for he will forgive in a large way.’” If you have left Jehovah, the sooner you return, the happier you will be. As you look at world events, it becomes evident that Armageddon is swiftly approaching and can come at any time. Also, life in this system is short and uncertain. None of us can know if we will be alive tomorrow. —Jas. 4:13, 14.

The brochure *Return to Jehovah*\* says: “Be assured that Jehovah will be there for you as you return to him. He will help you to deal with anxiety, to resolve hurt feelings, and to find the peace of mind and heart that comes from having a clean conscience. Then you may once again feel moved to serve Jehovah along with fellow worshippers.”—1 Pet. 2:25.

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\* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses and available in many languages on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

members. How can you do so? Draw strength from Jehovah by maintaining a routine of reading God's Word and meditating on it as well as attending Christian meetings. Joanna, whose father and sister left the truth, says: "I feel a calm come over me when I read about such Bible characters as Abigail, Esther, Job, Joseph, and Jesus. Their examples feed my heart and mind with positive thoughts that soothe the pain. I have also found our original songs to be very encouraging."

<sup>10</sup> Pour out your concerns to Jehovah. When you experience distressing feelings, do not stop praying to him. Beg our loving God to help you view the situation from his perspective and to "give you insight and instruct you in the way you should go." (Read Psalm 32:6-8.) Of course, it may be very painful to tell Jehovah how you really feel. But Jehovah fully understands your pain of heart. He loves you very much and urges you to pour out your heart to him.—Ex. 34:6; Ps. 62:7, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Support the decision. Disfellowshipping is part of Jehovah's arrangement. His loving correction

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10. What does Psalm 32:6-8 reveal about how to cope with distressing feelings?

11. According to Hebrews 12:11, why should we trust in Jehovah's loving discipline? (See also the box "Disfellowshipping—Jehovah's Loving Discipline at Work.")

# Comforting Scriptures if Your Loved One Has Left Jehovah

- Psalm 30:10
- Psalm 34:4, 6, 18, 19
- Psalm 39:12
- Psalm 61:1, 2
- Psalm 94:17-19
- Ephesians 3:20
- Philippians 4:6, 7

is in the best interests of everyone, including the wrongdoer. (Read Hebrews 12:11.) Any negative comments about the way a disciplinary matter was handled by the elders have likely been initiated by someone who did not mention details that would put the wrongdoer in a bad light. We simply do not have all the facts. It is wise, then, to trust that the elders who took judicial action made every effort to follow Scriptural principles and to judge “for Jehovah.” —2 Chron. 19:6.

<sup>12</sup> By supporting the elders’ decision to disfellowship your loved one, you may actually help him to return to Jehovah. “Severing family association

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**12.** What benefits have some experienced because they supported Jehovah’s arrangement for discipline?

with our adult son was extremely difficult,” admits Elizabeth, quoted earlier. “But after he returned to Jehovah, he admitted that he deserved to be disfellowshipped. In time, he expressed appreciation for the lessons he learned. I came to value Jehovah’s discipline,” she says. Her husband, Mark, adds: “Much later, our son told me that he wanted to come back in part because we did exactly what we had to do. I’m so glad Jehovah helped us to be obedient.”

<sup>13</sup> Confide in understanding friends. Associate with mature Christians who can help you to maintain a positive attitude. (Prov. 12:25; 17:17) Joanna, mentioned earlier, says: “In my heart, I felt alone. But talking to trustworthy friends helped me to cope.” What, though, if it seems that some in the congregation say things to you that make you feel worse?

<sup>14</sup> Be patient with your brothers and sisters. Realistically, not everyone will respond in an ideal way. (Jas. 3:2) We are all imperfect, so do not be surprised if some struggle with what to say or even unintentionally make comments that cause you pain. Remember the apostle Paul’s admonition: “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one

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13. What can help you to deal with painful emotions?

14. Why do we need to “continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely”?



# Disfellowshipping—Jehovah’s Loving Discipline at Work

How does the disfellowshipping arrangement reflect God’s love?

1. Love motivates elders to make every effort to help wrongdoers. A Christian is disfellowshipped only if two factors coincide: He has committed a serious sin, and he is not repentant.—Heb. 12:7, 9-11.
2. Disfellowshipping protects the congregation. An unrepentant sinner is like a person who has a highly contagious viral infection and needs to be quarantined in order to protect others from getting sick.—1 Cor. 5:6, 7, 11-13.
3. Disfellowshipping may move a sinner to repent. Many who got disfellowshipped were jolted to their senses and in time returned to Jehovah.—Luke 15:11-24.
4. When a repentant wrongdoer returns, the heavens rejoice and the congregation welcomes him back.—Luke 15:7.

another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another.” (Col. 3:13) One sister whose relative was disfellowshipped explains: “Jehovah has helped me to forgive brothers who tried to do the right thing in an imperfect way.” What can the congregation do to help faithful family members?

## THE CONGREGATION CAN HELP

<sup>15</sup> Warmly welcome faithful family members. A sister named Miriam admits that she was anxious about going to the meetings after her brother was disfellowshipped. “I was afraid of what people would say. But there were wonderful friends who shared my sadness without showing resentment toward my disfellowshipped brother. Thanks to them, I did not feel alone in my grief.” Another sister recalls: “After our son was disfellowshipped, dear friends came to comfort us. Some admitted that they did not know what to say. They shed a tear with me or wrote me a note. What they did helped me tremendously!”

<sup>16</sup> Continue to support faithful family members. They need your love and encouragement now more than ever. (Heb. 10:24, 25) At times, family members

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15. What can help family members whose loved one was recently disfellowshipped?

16. How can the congregation provide ongoing support?



The congregation can give loving support to faithful family members  
(See paragraph 17)

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of disfellowshipped ones have felt that they too have been excluded from association with the congregation. Do not let that happen! Young people whose parents have left the truth especially need commendation and encouragement. Maria, whose husband was disfellowshipped and left the family, says: “Some of my friends came to my house and cooked food and helped us with the family study. They felt my pain and cried with me. They defended me when false rumors circulated. They really lifted my spirits!” —Rom. 12:13, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Elders, use opportunities available to strengthen faithful family members. You have a special responsibility to console fellow worshippers whose loved ones have left Jehovah. (1 Thess. 5:14) Take the initiative to encourage them before and after

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17. How can elders provide compassionate support?

Christian meetings. Visit them and pray for them. Work with them in the ministry, or at times invite them to join you for family worship. Spiritual shepherds need to show Jehovah's grieving sheep the compassion, love, and attention they need.—1 Thess. 2:7, 8.

## REMAIN HOPEFUL AND CONTINUE TO TRUST IN JEHOVAH

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah “does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (Read 2 Peter 3:9.) Although a person may commit a serious sin, his life is still precious to God. Think of the high price Jehovah has paid—the ransom sacrifice of his own beloved Son—for the lives of sinners. Jehovah compassionately reaches out to help such ones return to him. He hopes they will choose to do so, as we can see from Jesus' illustration of the lost son. (Luke 15:11-32) Many who left the truth returned later to their loving heavenly Father. And the congregation welcomed them with open arms. Elizabeth, quoted earlier, experienced the joy of seeing her son reinstated. Thinking back, she says, “I really appreciated those who encouraged us not to give up hope.”

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18. According to 2 Peter 3:9, what does God desire for wrongdoers?

**19** We can always trust in Jehovah. He never gives us direction that will cause us harm. He is a generous and compassionate Father who has deep love for all who love and worship him. Be assured that Jehovah will not abandon you in your time of anguish. (Heb. 13:5, 6) “Jehovah never abandoned us,” says Mark, mentioned earlier. “He is never far from us when we go through difficulties.” Jehovah will continue to give you “the power beyond what is normal.” (2 Cor. 4:7) Yes, you *can* remain faithful and hopeful even when a loved one leaves Jehovah.

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**19.** Why can we continue to trust in Jehovah?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 52:** When a brother abandons his family and Jehovah, his wife and their children suffer. **Page 61:** Two elders come to provide spiritual encouragement to a family in the congregation.

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**WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES?**

■ Psalm 78:40, 41    ■ Psalm 32:6-8    ■ Hebrews 12:11

**SONG 44**

A Prayer of the Lowly One

# 44      *A Prayer of the Lowly One* (Psalm 4:1)

1. Jehovah God, I call to you and ask you:

“Hear my prayer.”

My wounds are deep and slow to heal;  
my load is hard to bear.

Despondent thoughts and disappointed hopes  
have left me weak.

O God of comfort, care for me;  
your favor I do seek.

*(CHORUS)*

*Do raise me up; help me endure.*

*When I'm in doubt, make my hope sure.*

*From deep despair, I turn to you.*

*Jehovah God, my strength renew.*

2. Your Word has been my comfort and  
a refuge when I'm weak,

Expressing feelings dear to me  
in words I cannot speak.

Please build in me the faith and trust  
that your Word does impart.

And help me always know your love  
is greater than my heart.

*(Chorus)*